

# THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT – MATTHEW 5-7

## The 4th & 5th Beatitudes: The Appetite and Mercy of Kingdom Citizens

### Matthew 5:6-7

Faith Church of Linden

By Daniel Patz on April 19, 2026

*The following notes are a draft of my sermon. These are not my pulpit notes or a manuscript I use to preach with but something I type up before writing out my “pulpit notes”. I hope they are helpful.*

This is the fifth sermon in our series on the Sermon on the Mount. In recent weeks we have looked at the Beatitudes as a whole, then examined the first Beatitude (“Blessed are the poor in spirit”), and then the second and third together (“Blessed are those who mourn” and “Blessed are the meek”).

Today we turn to the fourth and fifth Beatitudes:

#### Matthew 5:6-7 (ESV)

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Jesus, in this sermon, concerns Himself and us with the Kingdom of Heaven – who are the Kingdom citizens – how do they live and what are they like. We have already seen that the Kingdom of God is for the poor in spirit.

3 points this morning – 1) The Stairway of Joy for Kingdom Citizens – The Beatitudes, 2) The Appetite of Kingdom Citizens, and 3) The Mercy of Kingdom Citizens

## 1. The Stairway of Joy for Kingdom Citizens

*See Thomas Watson on the Beatitudes.*

Let us begin by recalling what we have seen so far about the Beatitudes. They are **pronouncements of happiness** for kingdom citizens—an invitation to true joy and human flourishing. Yet they describe the way of the cross: hard, sharp realities that cut against our natural instincts. In them we find promises of future glory and present blessing. They set forth **grace-formed traits** for every believer—not just an elite few. Every Christian is called to grow in *all* of them. These qualities are the fruit of the Holy Spirit’s work in the heart of a true believer. They mark us as distinct from the world, causing us to shine as lights in the darkness. And supremely, they are perfectly fulfilled in Jesus Christ—in His earthly ministry and in His glory now.

In one sense, the Beatitudes form a **stairway of joy**. This does not mean we climb it in our own strength to earn heaven. We cannot. But there is a logical procession, a beautiful order produced by grace:

- It begins with **poverty of spirit**—a Spirit-given awareness that we are spiritually bankrupt before a holy God.
- This leads us to **mourn** over our own sin, the sins of others, the misery sin brings, and the lack of glory given to our great God.
- Mourning, in turn, produces **meekness**—a humble posture toward God and others. We know we deserve only hell, yet we have been lavished with astonishing grace in Christ.

The first three Beatitudes are deeply inward, though meekness begins to move us outward in relationships. Now we come to more positive expressions. If the first Beatitude empties us (because we truly are destitute), the fourth fills us with a holy longing. We hunger and thirst for the right thing—**righteousness**—and this appetite naturally flows into the fifth: lives marked by **mercy** and love toward others who desperately need God's grace.

This is the stairway of joy: emptying → mourning → meekness → holy hunger → merciful living. And every step is grace from start to finish.

**Reflection Question:** Where are you on this stairway right now? Are you still clinging to some self-sufficiency, or has grace brought you low enough to hunger for more of Christ?

## 2. The Appetite of Kingdom Citizens (Matthew 5:6)

**“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”**

Jesus commends a trait to us: a spiritual appetite that hungers and thirsts after righteousness. There is an implied duty here—cultivate and pursue this earnest, intense desire.

Righteousness is a major theme throughout the Sermon on the Mount. First, there is the **imputed righteousness** we receive when we come to Christ in faith. This is the perfect righteousness of God declared to us by grace alone. When we stand before God one day, we will be justified—not because of our own works, but because we are covered by Christ's blood, forgiven, and clothed in His righteousness (see Romans 3:21-26; Philippians 3:9).

No one is saved until they realize their desperate need for this righteousness. They yearn for it. They cry out for it, knowing they can never produce it themselves. They come empty-handed, hungry and thirsty, begging God to give what He promises in

Christ. Have you done this? If not, I urge you today: receive the righteousness that is found only in Christ by faith.

But Jesus is speaking here primarily of something else. True kingdom citizens possess an ongoing **spiritual appetite** for *practical* righteousness—holiness. This means the grace of God so works in us that we hunger for God's will, God's character, God's commands, and God's Word to shape our thinking, motives, actions, and everything we do.

This appetite shows itself throughout the sermon:

- We are willing to be persecuted “for righteousness’ sake” (Matthew 5:10) rather than compromise holiness.
- Our righteousness must “exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees” (Matthew 5:20)—not by discarding God's law, but by obeying it from the heart. We avoid not only physical adultery but lust; not only murder but anger and insults (Matthew 5:21-30).
- We practice our righteousness not for human praise but for our Father's reward (Matthew 6:1).
- Instead of anxiety over food, drink, and clothing, we “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness” (Matthew 6:33).

This is **whole-hearted righteousness**. It cares about doing the right thing for the right reasons—pleasing our Father who loves us, whom we have grown to love and delight in more than anything else. It is what we pray when we say, “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). Only those growing in this righteousness can truly mean that prayer.

Jesus promises that those who hunger and thirst **will be satisfied** (or “filled”). This means we will increasingly receive His righteousness, find joy in it, and discover that we were made to know and enjoy God's will. Yet the fullness awaits the day of Christ, when we will be perfectly satisfied in His likeness, fully righteous as He is righteous, filled with all the fullness of God (see Psalm 17:15; 1 John 3:2).

**Thomas Watson** (Puritan pastor) captured the nature of this hunger well: It is painful—nothing else satisfies. The soul cries, “Give me Christ or I die!” It wrestles through difficulties, refusing lesser things. Hunger less after the world and more after righteousness, for “the robe of righteousness never waxes old” (Isaiah 61:10).

### **Psalm 119**

**Psalm 119:20** — “My soul is consumed with **longing** for your rules at all times.” (This portrays an all-consuming hunger for God's righteous decrees.)

**Psalm 119:40** — “Behold, I **long** for your precepts; in your righteousness give me life!” (As you read today—this directly links longing for God's precepts with a plea for life rooted in His righteousness.)

**Psalm 119:81** — "My soul **longs** for your salvation; I hope in your word." (A deep yearning for God's delivering salvation, tied to trust in His word.)

**Psalm 119:131** — "I open my mouth and **pant**, because I **long** for your commandments." (Vivid imagery of panting like someone thirsty or breathless with intense desire for God's commands.)

**Psalm 119:174** — "I **long** for your salvation, O LORD, and your law is my delight." (Combines longing for salvation with delight in God's law.)

### **Reflection/Application Questions:**

- Do you hunger and thirst after righteousness? Do you want to obey Him more than anything? Do you hate sin as the greatest evil?
- Are you growing in a desire to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Him with all your heart, soul, and mind (Matthew 22:37)?
- If you have never truly hungered for righteousness, you may not yet be a Christian. But the Holy Spirit can awaken this appetite today. Most of us do not hunger as we ought—let us feast on God's Word, taste His goodness, and cry out for a greater appetite and fuller measure of His righteousness.

## **3. The Mercy of Kingdom Citizens (Matthew 5:7)**

**"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy."**

If we are growing in righteousness—including this holy appetite—we will grow in merciful living. No one is a kingdom citizen apart from God's mercy. His mercy is greater than our sin. We have come to know and trust it through Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for sinners. Mercy is God seeing us in our miserable state of sin—with all its soul- and life-wrecking effects—and rescuing us with grace instead of the punishment we deserve.

The merciful are those who see others in misery and help them—both physically and spiritually. They relieve the consequences of sin in people's lives, whether from their own sin or the sins of others. This shows itself in caring for the poor and needy, and especially in forgiving those who sin against us.

We see this illustrated powerfully in Scripture:

- In the **Good Samaritan** (Luke 10:25-37), the religious leaders pass by the beaten, dying man, but the Samaritan binds his wounds, risks his own safety and resources, and cares for him at personal cost. Jesus asks, "Which of these proved to be a neighbor?" The answer: "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus says, "Go and do likewise."

- In the parable of the **unforgiving servant** (Matthew 18:21-35), a man is forgiven an unpayable debt (millions of dollars), yet he refuses to show mercy to a fellow servant who owes him a tiny amount. He is judged severely. Jesus warns: we who have received such forgiveness must overflow with mercy.

Kingdom citizens show mercy because we have received mercy. If someone claims to be a citizen of the kingdom yet shows no mercy, that is a serious warning—they may not truly belong. This does not mean we earn mercy by showing it (just as we do not earn forgiveness by forgiving). Rather, mercy is evidence that we have truly received it.

We are not perfect in this. The sermon provokes conviction, drives us to faith, and fills us with joy in God's grace as we remember His mercy to us—and then extend it to others.

Mercy is costly. It takes time, money, energy, reputation, and our selfish impulses. Yet this is the call of discipleship. It is the call of those who follow Jesus.

Think practically:

- There are weary people in this church, in your family, and in your workplace who need your mercy right now. Most are more distressed than they let on.
- The most difficult or frustrating people around you—have they seen living, active mercy in vivid color from a follower of Jesus?
- Oh, that they would taste the mercy of God through you and me!

**Reflection/Application Question:** Who in your life right now needs mercy from you? How can you show compassion and care this week, even when it costs you?

## Conclusion

Isaiah 61 provides a beautiful Old Testament connection to these Beatitudes—and to the whole “stairway of joy” for kingdom citizens. There God promises to send His anointed Servant (fulfilled in Jesus) who brings good news to the poor, binds up the brokenhearted, proclaims liberty to captives, and gives “a garment of praise instead of a faint spirit.” The result? God's people will be called “oaks of righteousness,” and “the Lord will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations” (Isaiah 61:1-3, 10-11; see also Jesus' reading in Luke 4:18-21).

Oh, the happiness of those who come to the end of themselves and find their life and everything in Christ! Happiness is not found by those who hunger and thirst after happiness itself, but after **righteousness**. May we echo the old Scottish saint who prayed, “O God, make me as holy as a pardoned sinner can be!”

In this growing holiness, we extend our holy God's mercy to a broken world and show them what forgiveness, kindness, and true humanity are meant to look like.

May God help us. May God give us the appetites He wants us to have—and mercy to this world through us.

**Final Invitation:** If you have never come to Christ hungry and thirsty, empty-handed, crying out for His mercy and righteousness—today is the day. He welcomes you with open arms. And for all of us who have, let us come again, asking the Spirit to deepen our hunger and enlarge our mercy.